

## Small Business Assistance Providers Forum Meeting November 21, 2002

Meeting Notes:

### Attendance:

Richard Rasmussen - DEQ, Chuck McCarty - DEQ, Dana Bayless - DCR, **Mark Heede - DBA**, Preston Wilhelm - DBA, Jim McKean - DBA, Richard Daly - EPA RIII, **Gordon Dixon - NFIB**; **Catherine Harold - CBLAD**, **Adam Ebbin - DOLI**, Ben Blumenthal - DRS, Louellen Brumgard - DHCD, Bill Scruggs - VDACS, **Willie Miles - VDMBE**, **Dyane Pergerson - Business Owner**

**Note: Bold** indicates First time attendee.

### Welcome:

First time attendees welcomed.

Comments by Gordon Dixon indicated that from his perspective as State Director of Virginia's National Federation of Independent Businesses the efforts of the group and the creation of the tool Va Can are both important and necessary and can provide reassurance to the business community that government cares. With respect to VA Can he felt that both web and hard copy will be necessary - the business community still prefers to receive their information face to face, or by telephone - preferably 800#. Not everyone is using the web.

### Summary of October 22, 2002 meeting:

#### Draft Presentation/Discussion of VA Can:

Scope of document?: cannot be all encompassing - resources are not there to accomplish.  
We will build on draft.

Research other documents that provide assistance to businesses and look at integration/reference in VA Can.

#### Ways to Improve and Enhance the Draft

- Add preface

- Add table of contents

- Add index by topic

- Add contact information both in text and as part of the index (similar to phone book blue pages)

- Add business category breakout (construction, agriculture, medical, professional, manufacturing) to highlight relevant programs

Web version format would be slightly different eg. Hot links to reference documents and contacts.

Add some sizzle to the appearance. (Louellen will work with Preston on this)

Additional partners: Look at inclusion of Tax Dept., State Corporation Commission, social Services.

Look at what other states have done:

Use Expert Systems - Maryland - Louellen will research. (possible project for future activity)

Delaware - Dick Daly will research and provide materials to Richard for dissemination.

#### Future Activities:

Expert systems?

Gordon Dixon suggested getting other business groups involved. Discussed creating a meeting program around association/business participation. Will probably have to wait until after the General Assembly session. Gordon agreed to coordinate.

Asked all participants to look at their existing networks for others that may have an interest in participating and provide contact information to Chuck & Richard.

Pursue a potential activity with Tracy Garland. - Environmental Management Assistance Program, Radford Univ. - Several expressed interest to be involved in outreach efforts to business and local government in that area. Richard will call Tracy and report back at next meeting.

Mark Heede already actively functioning in a call program with banks and economic developers around the state. Would be glad to deliver a "Provider" message as a part of his outreach.

Catherine Harold indicated CBLADs efforts with local communities in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed could provide an avenue for "Provider" information/tools.

Preston and others indicated interest in participating in outreach meetings where businesses were involved.

**Everyone in attendance expressed enthusiastic interest in continuing the Providers Forum meetings on a bi-monthly basis. Our NEXT MEETING - January 7, 2003 DEQ Piedmont Regional Office 9AM to 11:00AM. Please RSVP by January 3, 2003.**

**We hope to see everyone there.**